

Facets



February
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Loving others

One relationship at a time



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Facets

Facet - *n.* 1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.
2. The particular angle from which something is considered

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Susan Bokhoven, center, spends time with Kirsty Harvey, 9, left, and Damon Harvey, 6. By Nirmalendu Majumdar.

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Phone: (515) 232-2160 Address: 317 Fifth St. Ames, IA. 50010



DEBRA ATKINSON, M.S., C.S.C.S., graduated from Iowa State University, where she has also taught in the department of kinesiology for 12 years. She has been a fitness professional, writing, speaking and practicing for 25 years.



PEGGY BEST is an administrative specialist for the Center for Crops Utilization Research and the BioCentury Research Farm at Iowa State University. She is married and resides in Ames. She has one son, one stepdaughter and two grandsons.



CLARE BILLS is a writer, speaker and artist living in Ames. She has a master's degree in journalism and is also a graduate of the Institute for Children's Literature. She now writes for magazines and websites.



JENN BOCELLA is a senior at Iowa State University majoring in communication studies/journalism. She will graduate in May. She is involved with the campus ministry The Salt Company and enjoys quality time with family and friends.



DEBORAH BUNKA is a freelance writer, graphic designer and jewelry maker. Her interests include politics, literature and geology. A native of Canada, she moved to Ames 12 years ago. She lives with her husband and two children.



MOLLY CLARK is an Iowa State University student majoring in journalism visual communications. She is from Atlantic. Molly also works part time as a street vendor in Ames.



KATHY L. P. COOK, M.D., is a Board Certified Dermatologist. She works at Skin Solutions Dermatology in Ames.



JOSHUA DUCHENE is a licensed cosmetologist who works at a salon in Ames.



KATHY HANSON is the education reporter for The Tribune. The job suits her because she's insatiably curious. She lives in Ames with her husband and the youngest of their six children.



LAURA KIMM completed her dietetic internship at Iowa State University in 2010. She is working toward her credentials to become a registered and licensed dietitian. Laura works at the West Ames Hy-Vee grocery store.



KAREN PETERSEN graduated from Iowa State University in family resource management. She is a Certified Financial Planner, has three grandchildren and can be found on Ada Hayden Lake kayaking.

MENDING RELATIONSHIPS ON A SISTER TRIP

My sister, Connie, and I recently began mending a sibling relationship that had

been tattered for many years. In July, we both took a giant step toward renewing our relationship:

jumping in head-first with our first-ever sister vacation, nine days in South Dakota.

On Day 1, after five hours of travel, we made our first pit stop, and I offered to drive so she could take a break. She looked at me kind of funny and tossed me the keys. As I pulled onto the interstate, I could tell she was very nervous. I asked what was wrong. She told me no one but she had ever driven her vehicle!

Pretty soon, she started itching, and before we knew it, she had hives. After awhile, I relinquished the wheel, and soon her hives were gone.

We hit the Badlands that evening, hiking on trails that were scattered with "Beware of Rattlesnakes" signs. I jumped at everything that moved, grasshoppers included. We exchanged a lot of sibling banter, such as, "Go climb up those rocks, and I'll take your picture." ... "No, YOU climb up." Or one of us would stand at the edge of a cliff for a photo and hear the other one say, "Take one more step back."

The next morning, we headed to the Custer area and did the touristy things such as visiting Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse and panning for gold. We thought Bear Country would be a tourist trap, but it turned out to



PEGGY BEST



Above: Connie Hall feeding grain to a band of wild horses at the South Dakota Wild Horse Sanctuary.



Left: Connie and Peggy in Bear Country, USA.

Photos courtesy of Peggy Best



Photo courtesy of Peggy Best

Connie Hall and her "wild" burros at Custer State Park.

be loads of fun. Several bears surrounded our vehicle, and we sat stuck in the middle of them for 15 minutes.

The next few days, we hiked to Harney Peak, toured Wind Cave, took a million pictures of buffalos and fed the wild burros when the rangers weren't around. I think the "wild" burros would have climbed right into Connie's truck and come home with us if we could have kept feeding them the horse treats Connie brought along.

Connie really wanted to go horseback riding, too, but said she wouldn't if I didn't want to. We grew up with horses, but I have an ingrained fear of them from a few "incidents" that date back to my childhood. In a very weak moment, I might have whispered, "OK, I'll go if you want me to," and she jumped on that. Before I knew it, we were signed up for a half-day trail ride.

I was close to a panic attack even before we started, but I'm so glad that we did it. The trail ride took us up and down steep, rocky hills and through rivers. We had to take a detour around a lone buffalo on the trail, with our horses on full alert, huffing and puffing. It was an unbelievable experience, and if it wasn't for my sister's urging, I never would have had the courage to get on a horse again. I was pumped after that personal accomplishment, and Connie told me how proud she was of me.

The big event of the week was our time at the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary. Connie is passionate about this cause, and after visiting there, I understand why.

Connie had set up a private tour with the

director, Susan Watt, for an all-day adventure tour, and I rode along on her dime. For the private tour, we were on the far side of the sanctuary where there are no public tours. The sanctuary is on 11,000 acres of land, plus an additional 2,000 acres leased from the Sioux tribe.

We were out for 10 hours and saw the most amazing scenery and the most beautiful herds of wild horses. At one point, we came upon a band of 13 horses that had gotten through a fence and off the sanctuary property. Susan promptly kicked us out of her truck, reminding us that it wasn't called an adventure tour for nothing, and sent us through the barbed-wire fence to slowly walk the fence line, waving our arms, dodging imaginary rattlesnakes and urging the horses a mile down the way to a gate she would be waiting at to try to get them back onto the property. Success!

We also opened and closed barbed-wire gates for Susan to drive through, one with a herd of cows and one big bull standing 15 feet away from us, staring us down. We had a picnic lunch at the top of a peak overlooking thousands of acres as we watched herds of wild horses run.

It was quite the adventure, and my sister and I made some great memories together. I also learned a lot on this trip. I learned that with a little courage and a lot of faith, I can defeat my fears. I learned about a passion my sister has for wild horses, and she learned I am actually a pretty good driver; she tossed me the keys on the way home and let me drive again.

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Loving others



By Nirmalendu Majumdar/Facets

Susan Bokhoven, center, plays a board game with Kirsty Harvey, 9, left, and Damon Harvey, 6.

one relationship at a time

By Kathy Hanson

As Valentine's Day hype fills the store aisles and airwaves, longtime Ames resident Susan Bokhoven sighs and wonders aloud if people ever really stop to think about the deeper meaning of such holidays.

No matter one's spiritual inclinations, holidays should be a break from the relentless pursuit of earning money and consuming goods, she says, to allow folks to enjoy the blessings of friendship, family and other relationships.

Bokhoven's friends and acquaintances say she makes relationships a priority, not just during holidays, but year-round, by going beyond the comfortable sphere of friends and family to extend love to people she describes as often having "two strikes against them."

A little girl whose whole family Bokhoven mentors, for example, and a young man, now 30, who spent weekends and holidays with Bokhoven when he was a child at Lutheran Services in Iowa, Beloit, were the first to be in touch with her on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day last year, she said.

It would be hard to count the number of individuals and families Bokhoven has befriended by providing foster care, offering respite care for Beloit, and volunteering for Birthright, among others, said long-term friend Marcia Noxon.

Having three sons of her own and providing foster care was never an excuse for Bokhoven to claim she was too busy to make room for others, Noxon said.

"When I first met Sue (in the early 1990s), she was known as the neighborhood mom (around Fillmore Street)," she said. "Yet she offered to babysit my daughter, Amy, who is the same age as her youngest son, Eric, so I could volunteer in the Birthright office."

Bokhoven — whose son Nicolas is 32, son Mark is 28 and son Eric is 25 — said she began providing foster care in 1978, taking 12 children into her home over the years.

It was no problem squeezing Amy Noxon into the mix, she said.

Noxon said Bokhoven "bent over backwards" to make Amy feel at home playing with a boy. It wasn't long before Amy looked forward to going to Bokhoven's house, and Amy and Sue forged a life-long relationship.

"Even through high school," Noxon said, "if ever Amy needed anything, she always said, 'Let's talk to Sue about this.'"

Noxon credits Bokhoven's influence for some of Amy Noxon's focus and passion.

"Now, she's 25, spending 18 months train-

ing in Baku, Azerbaijan, at Bethany College of Missions," Noxon said.

Noxon said at first it was hard not be jealous of Sue.

"She was so organized and kind," she said. "But I got over it because she's good at noticing the different gifts God gives to us. She told me she wished she could talk to people the way I do."

Pointing Bokhoven toward volunteering at Birthright, a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization dedicated to supporting women through distressing unplanned pregnancies, is something Noxon will always be proud of, she said, because it gave Bokhoven more opportunities to build relationships with people during a tough spot in their lives.

Bokhoven said she has taken several young pregnant women into her home over the years.

"Even a few birth dads have stayed with us a couple of nights here and there," Bokhoven said.

Bokhoven met the family she now mentors through Birthright. She helps them with finances, takes the children overnight to give the parents a break, and often serves as the primary school contact.

"I probably have them at my house five times a week, one or two at a time," she said. "We also do fun things together and visit my extended family."

Noxon said developing such deep relationships requires sacrifice.

"You have to give up what you wanted to do that day," she said. "And Sue does that all the time."

Bokhoven said she knows she's taking a risk in such relationships.

"There is an element of trust that has to be there," she said. "You have to trust people, God and yourself."

It helps to have the support of her husband, Bill, vice president of engineering for Todd & Sargent Inc., she said, and her sons.

Bokhoven said the relationships she nurtures extend beyond the borders of Ames, of Iowa and even the United States.

She still keeps in touch with "little

friends" she taught in fourth and fifth grade in Fort Dodge, before her children were born.

The Fort Dodge relationships brought Katie Sanford, 27, to Bokhoven's home in 2008. Housing options in Ames fell through before Sanford could get settled for an internship in occupational therapy at Mary Greeley Medical Center, she said.

"Sue and my mom, Linda Sanford, taught together back in Fort Dodge," said Katie Sanford, who now lives in Rochester, Minn., and works for the Mayo Clinic.

"My mom knew she could call Sue," Sanford said. "It was really cool that she opened her house and gave me my own room. I always had meals, and we would talk every evening and watch the summer Olympics. I think she missed me when I left."

With tools such as Facebook, Bokhoven said, it's easy for far-flung friends to stay in touch, such as Andy Herringshaw, who stayed with the Bokhovens when he and his wife were waiting to embark on a mission and peace-building trip to rural Bolivia.

Still in graduate school at the time, Herringshaw said the Bokhovens' house gave him a place, after he moved out of his own house, to focus on his dissertation.

"They loaned me a bike, their car when I needed it, let me use their garage to finish selling the last of my worldly possessions," he said, "and even let us cook a farewell dinner with a couple friends in their kitchen."

Herringshaw said he recalls Bokhoven telling stories of folks who had stayed at her home because they were "running away from something."

"I was running TO something," he said, "and couldn't have gotten there without (the Bokhovens') kindness."

Along with her Christian Reformed Church heritage, which fosters caring for others, Bokhoven attributes her open-heart, open-home practices to her parents' example.

They constantly opened their "big, three-story house" in Worthington, Minn., to grandparents, cousins, foster children and even a "stray Australian my mom met at the Laundromat one day," she said.

Noxon said Bokhoven makes it look easy, but that's only because her priorities are in the right place.

"She cares for her family first, and then she does the same thing for the others," Noxon said. "She starts with little things, like a cup of tea. She listens. She invites you in and then she figures out what she can do to help, and it keeps going and going."

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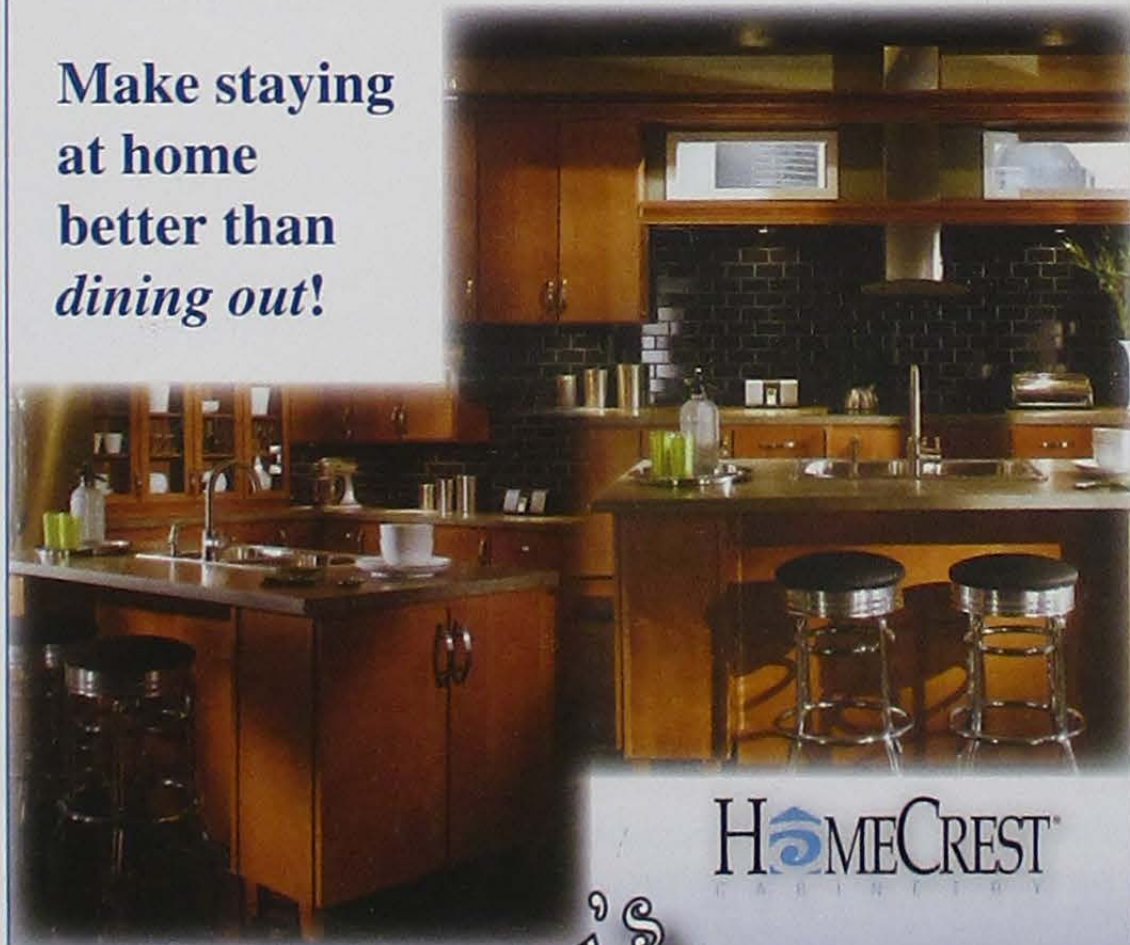
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The mother-daughter dance

By Clare Bills

Many famous mother-daughter duos publicly play out the push-and-pull implicit in this tricky relationship. The musical team of Naomi and Wynonna Judd readily comes to mind as an example of a duet that is sometimes less than harmonious.

Not all mother-daughter pairs are fraught with drama and friction, but all must cross a bridge when the daughter becomes an adult and the rules of engagement alter. When life flows smoothly, the changes build on a foundation of respect and love, flowering into a deeper bond. But even warm, loving relationships experience pitfalls and unexpected wounds and separations as the daughter asserts herself as an adult and the mother searches for balance.

Authors Sue Monk Kidd (*"The Secret Life of Bees"*) and her daughter, Ann Kidd Taylor, allow us to eavesdrop on the intricacies of their connection in their duo memoir, *"Traveling with Pomegranates."* It chronicles a series of trips they embark upon together to sacred sites in Greece, Turkey and France. At the time of the first adventure, Sue was on the threshold of her 50th birthday and contemplating a right turn in her career, from nonfiction to fiction. And she was struggling with health issues, which were reminding her of her own mortality. Sue writes:

"Turning fifty is about freedom and hitting your stride, and I do believe this. But everything has its opposite, its shadow, a darkness that defines the light. Rebirth is almost impossible without that darkness; I have at least learned that over the years. I tell myself I am experiencing the death of myself as mother, the death of myself as a younger woman — precious old lives going by the wayside."



Photo courtesy of Clare Bills

Clare Bills, her daughter, Rose Fife, and Rose's daughter, Madeline.

"Reflecting on my relationship with my 33-year-old daughter, Rose, I pinpoint the milestones that changed the way we relate to each other: the trip she took without me in high school, her first serious boyfriend, her marriage, the birth of her children and all the struggles implicit in each of these events."

"Many of these steps put distance between us, physically and emotionally. But there were other times that pulled us back together in new ways."

While Sue struggles with her own life, she is aware of an unspoken separation from her daughter. Ann has just finished college and has been turned down for the graduate school of her dreams. The disappointment leaves her depressed as she grapples with self-worth and her

future direction. Although she deeply loves and respects her mother, she cannot bring herself to tell her about the emotions that have sent her into a tailspin. Ann reflects:

"I wonder why I can't tell her what I'm going through ... Perhaps the shame of failing is not my only reason for not talking to her about it. We've been close since childhood, but I feel a kind of partition between us now, not anger or aloofness, but a room divider that properly marks the space: this is your territory, this is mine."

Underlying their discoveries is the realization that their relationship as two adult women is being redefined. Sue expresses it poignantly:

"I realize I'm still trying to work out the boundaries. How to love her (Ann) without interfering. How to step back and let her have her private world and yet still be an intimate part of it. When she talks about her feelings, I have to consciously tell myself she wants me to receive them, not fix them."

The work is a masterpiece on

many levels. As they explore sacred images and sites together, they eventually forge a new version of their bond, just as Sue had done with her mother when she reached womanhood.

Reflecting on my relationship with my 33-year-old daughter, Rose, I pinpoint the milestones that changed the way we relate to each other: the trip she took without me in high school, her first serious boyfriend, her marriage, the birth of her children and all the struggles implicit in each of these events.

Many of these steps put distance between us, physically and emotionally. But there were other times that pulled us back together in new ways — moments when we shared our love of music and literature along with the challenges of being a wife, mother, sister and daughter-in-law. Forging and understanding our bond in a new way added to the complexity and richness of it. Nurturing this connection allows us to reap the fruits of love and joy during the priceless times we have together.

Tending your relationships

When dreaming about the future, a lot of young women picture their perfect Prince

Charming standing at their side. He is a man of bravery, charm and wit, accompanied by a dashing smile and a heart of gold. It looks so simple in the movies; You just wish upon a star, and your fairy godmother delivers Prince Charming. And of course, you live happily ever after. The end.



**JENN
BOCCELLA**

Well, as I have grown, I have discovered that romantic relationships are not quite that easy. The reality of life begins to hit, and you discover that a relationship, romantic or not, takes work. But my own fairy godmother once shared a piece of wisdom with me, which I will never forget.

The lines etched around her eyes and mouth after years of laughter also speak of years of experience. I remember looking into her eyes one day when we were yet again having a frank discussion about relationships, and she said, "Jennifer, having a successful marriage is like tending a garden. A good marriage does not just happen. It takes hard work; you have to make it a priority and invest yourself in it." After an eye-opener like that, who needs a fairy godmother, when you have Mom?

Frequently, I reflect on that bit of wisdom. Instead of a fabricated notion of fairy-tale romance, it is a truth worthy of practicing. And not only is it relevant for Prince Charming, but it is usable in any kind of relationship.

Developing a beautiful bed of flowers or a lush vegetable garden is very similar to developing relationships: It is hard work. First of all, a good gardener must constantly tend his or her garden. To "tend" means to look after, take care of, nurture or give one's attention to. And so it is in relationships, both romantic and otherwise.

Before a gardener can even plant the first seed, she must decide what kind of garden, or relationship, she wants to tend. Does she want to start something completely new and watch it grow? Maybe it's a friendship with a co-worker or classmate, an "annual" in need of some attention? Or maybe it is an old friend, parent or husband, a "perennial" that needs to be nurtured. Choosing which relationships you need to tend is essential if you want the relationships to flourish.

A gardener must also think about how much time she has to devote. In the same way that



some gardens mix annuals and perennials, which require different levels of care, throughout a person's lifetime there will be relationships that are both short-lived and long-lasting. I have friendships that are 21 years old and still going strong, and I have also experienced significant bonds with friends who have been part of my life for only a few months. It is important to determine how much time I can give to nurture my garden, which relationships are worth investing in and how to make them thrive.

Despite being a thing of beauty and a lot of hard work, gardens will always be threatened by their fair share of pests. Being aware of how to control those pests is a necessity in main-

taining healthy plants. Relationships are no different. There will be pests: life's natural trials and tribulations. But with awareness and the right kind of "pest control" — such as communication, empathy and respect — a relationship will be able to withstand even the peskiest of pests.

A bed of roses does not pop up overnight. The gardener must choose again and again to cultivate her garden. In the same way, tending a relationship is a choice. It is a choice of how to use your time; it is a choice to keep it growing and healthy; it is a choice to make it prosper.

So, forget about the glass slipper and being home by midnight. Instead, pick up a pair of gardening gloves and get to work.

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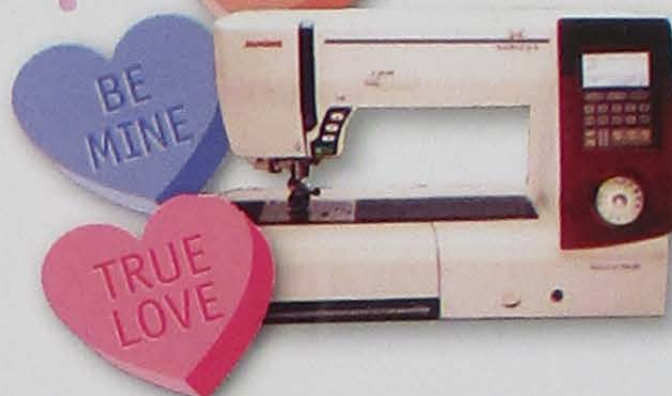
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My mother used to say, "Do you think money grows on trees?" I knew money didn't grow on trees; we were farmers. We planted corn, oats and sorghum. The grain we grew fed the cattle, hogs and chickens, and then we sold cattle, hogs and eggs. Sometimes we had money for extra things, but if the chickens weren't laying or livestock and grain prices were low, we lived a little differently.



**KAREN
PETERSEN**

Several years ago, my 3-year-old granddaughter was trying to convince me to move to her neighborhood. I explained that I needed to work, and my work was in Iowa.

Allie had a solution: "I get one dollar each week if I take out the garbage. I will let you have my job ... and you do have a credit card, don't you?"

I refrained from saying, "Do you think money sprouts from plastic?"

Here is a four-step program to help your child have a healthy relationship with money.

1. BE AN EXAMPLE

Include your children in your "money thinking." When you pay bills online or with a stamp, let your children know that is what you are doing.

Tell them you are paying the electric bill. You need electricity for the lights, kitchen appliances, electronic games and more.

It is important to pay the bill on time or by a certain date, or you might have to pay more.

2. NEEDS OR WANTS?

Use grocery shopping as a way to begin to teach the difference between needs and wants. One family I know is very sure of the difference in their needs and wants at the grocery store; healthy choices are the needs and what is on the grocery list. Sugared cereal, chips, soft drinks and pre-packaged foods are on the want list.

Each child has \$5 a month to choose a treat; they can eat it all at once or ration it to last all month.

3. LEARN TO EARN

If you are an ATM user, your child is likely to see you push a few buttons and then money appears. If you use a credit or debit card, you slide the plastic through a machine, and then you walk away with the "stuff" you want.

It is easy to see why children might think money sprouts from plastic and there are no limits.



Contributed photo

Karen Petersen teaches 11-year-old MaKayla Wengert about money.

Children should learn that money, the ability to have things, comes from working. So, how do you teach your children to work for money? It could be weekly household chores, or it could be extra chores that are not a part of the household routine. Each job should have a measurable amount of work, a specified time to complete the task and the amount of money earned directly related to the amount of work.

When they are old enough, let your children participate in developing chores for pay. You may be surprised at their ideas to benefit the family and their own ability to spend.

4. SPEND OR SAVE?

Help your child develop a spending plan. Provide four clear plastic jars labeled as follows:

Sharing jar: Deposit 10 percent. Help your child find a cause and experience the good feeling that comes with giving.

Short-term savings jar: Deposit 30 percent. This jar is for things that cost more than the "spend now" amount. Young children might save for two to three weeks, and older children for two to three months.

Long-term saving jar: Deposit 30 percent. This money is for the future, maybe college or a car.

Spending jar: Deposit the remaining 30 percent. This is the immediate gratification jar.

Remember, you can help your child have a realistic relationship with money: Set a good example. Demonstrate wants and needs. Help your child understand the importance of earning money. Help develop a giving/saving/spending plan.

Because life is ... more than money.

Karen L Petersen CFP® CDFA™ is a fee-based financial advisor. You can contact her at (515) 232-2785 or karen@mymorethanmoney.net.

FITNESS IS ALL IN THE FAMILY

"Are we still going?" That was the question posed to me by my brother, Jon, prior to the annual Fourth of July fun run in Reinbeck, Iowa. The drizzling rain made him question the event.

"Are you afraid of melting?" and "Are you kidding?" were my responses. This guy had been training for the event for quite some time. I couldn't see any reason to let a little precipitation stop him if the last decade he'd experienced didn't get in his way.

It's hard to be happy if you're not healthy. Dan Buettner, author of "Thrive" and New York Times bestseller "The Blue Zones: Lessons From the People Who've Lived the Longest," has documented best practices in health, longevity and happiness. No matter what else you do have, health is the prerequisite to optimizing it.

You know someone who isn't at optimal health. Most Americans can reach out and touch someone with a serious health concern, at any age. Each of us has come to know the value of health personally.

A decade ago, my brother was sick enough that no one knew if he'd be celebrating his 50th birthday. At 42, he had been diagnosed with a rare disease called Stills. Few people have it. The Mayo Clinic hadn't seen much of it, but showed his example to the residents there. He was hospitalized numerous times, had multiple surgeries, and was on high doses of Prednisone for years. Each time they tapered his dosage down, his symptoms would come back full blown. He was what you'd call a frequent flier at Mayo.

His bones were so fragile from the medicine that was saving his life, he fractured his spine sneezing and now has a steel rod there for good. He had two emergency surgeries to put in tubes when he couldn't swallow. By some miracle, he slowly began to get better. He'll always be on meds, but he's here.

He's no longer the active guy he was once. He doesn't sail or play racquetball,



DEBRA ATKINSON



Photo courtesy of Debra Atkinson

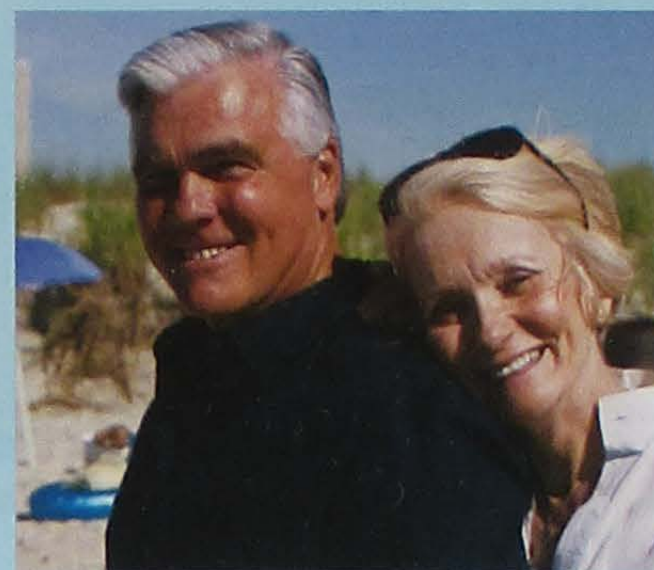
and he recently had to give up golf, but he did reach and celebrate his 50th birthday. He also slowly began walking for fitness, then jogging, and finally on the Fourth of July, he participated in an annual small town fun run along with me, my son and our dog. Jon had won by getting to the starting line. He won by sharing smiles and high fives along the route. Imagine the hysteries when each of us, excluding the dog, placed in our age groups. Jon got a first-place medal.

The entire town knew the history of Jon's long-term illness. There was quite a roar of applause for that puny little medal at that humble awards ceremony in the rain. Those are the moments that make memories. When being able just to start is appreciated so much, winning is already yours, and a medal is just an external symbol.

In our family, being active together is a way to express gratitude for things we don't say out loud every day.

What will you race for? What do you need to celebrate, to mark, to make sure not to take for granted? Getting to the starting line is what matters. You win by participating in your life.

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A perfect pair

Red wine and dark chocolate

Most people take their wine and chocolate separately. They can be a tough match.

But red wine with chocolate work pretty well. Not only does this pairing taste great, but the two provide many health-promoting benefits. One research team recently announced a combination of red wine and dark chocolate in moderate amounts enhances cognitive performance in older adults.



LAURA KIMM

DARK CHOCOLATE

Eating chocolate is one of life's greatest pleasures, and more and more research suggests that it's good for your heart. Dark chocolate may help reduce levels of LDL or "bad" cholesterol and raise the HDL or "good" cholesterol. This may help reduce your risk of heart disease. The reason: dark chocolate is richer in cocoa than milk chocolate, and cocoa contains flavonoids, natural antioxidants that help prevent cancer and heart disease. A recent study by researchers at Cornell University found that a glass of cocoa contained more antioxidants per serving than red wine, green tea or black tea.

Even the fat in dark chocolate isn't as bad as it could be. One-third of the fat found in dark chocolate is steric acid. This type of fat seems to have no effect on blood cholesterol. Another third of the fat in chocolate is oleic acid, a monounsaturated fat also found in olive oil that has been found to be beneficial for heart health. Despite this sweet news, eating too much chocolate does have its drawbacks.

Chocoholics should be aware of their portion size to avoid consuming too many calories, causing unwanted weight gain. A little bit of dark chocolate can go a long way. Make it an occasional indulgence and choose the best chocolate, instead of cheap candy. Pick your favorite and eat it slowly. Savor the taste, smell and texture. Another way to savor the taste of chocolate is to combine it with a filling dessert such as strawberries, and you'll feel twice as satisfied. But beware; all this good news applies only to dark chocolate. White chocolate and Dutch

chocolate do not contain the healthy flavonoids.

RED WINE

Years of evidence suggest that red wine, consumed in moderation, improves heart and circulatory health. Red wine contains the antioxidants resveratrol, saponin and quercetin.

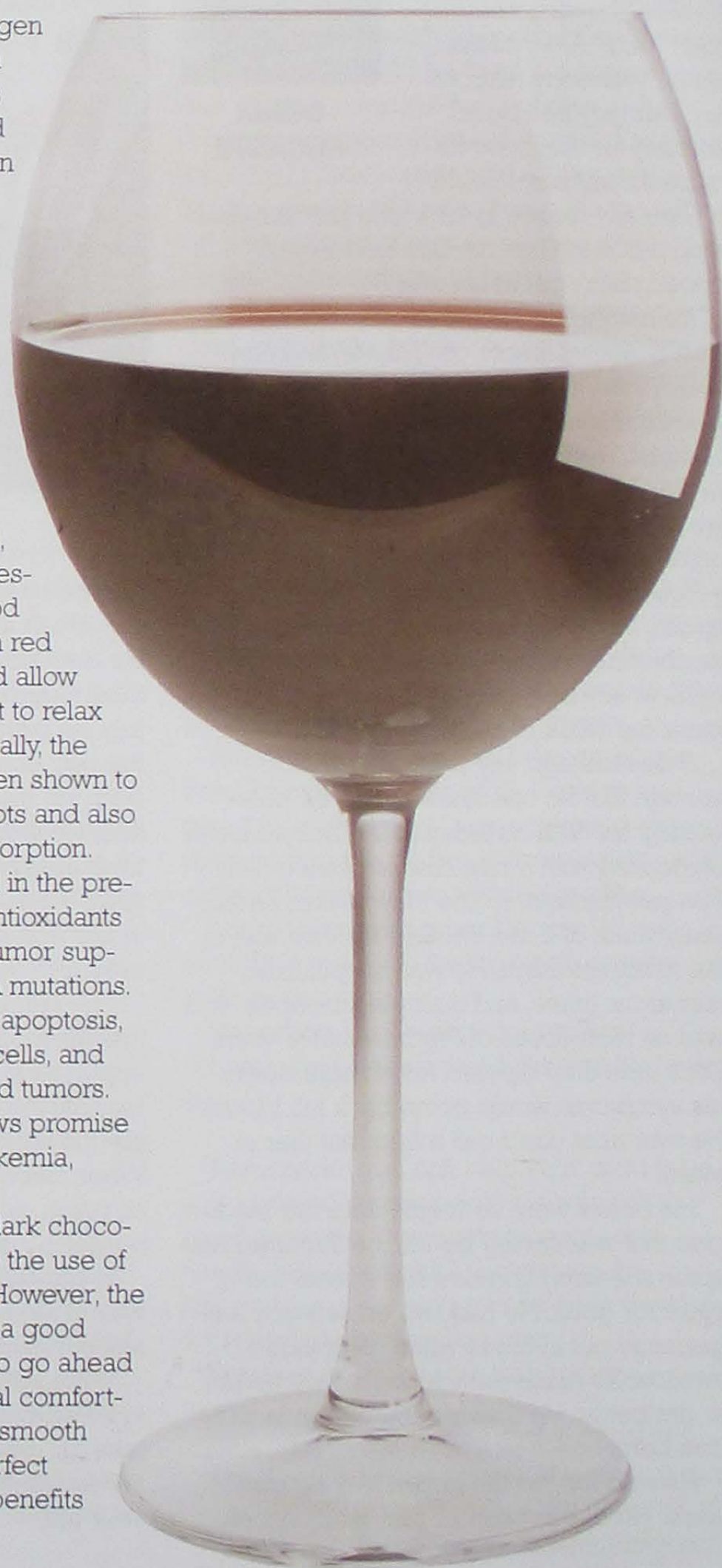
Resveratrol helps reduce estrogen depletion in menopause, saponin binds to cholesterol and prevents the absorption of cholesterol, and quercetin prevents the breakdown of LDL "bad" cholesterol.

Drinking red wine in moderation provides many heart-healthy benefits. Beneficial effects occur with one to two four-ounce glasses a day. Above that amount, the benefits no longer outweigh the negative effects.

Red wine has been shown to increase HDL "good" cholesterol, while preventing LDL "bad" cholesterol from forming plaque in blood vessels. The antioxidants found in red wine help regulate nitric acid and allow the smooth muscles of your heart to relax and improve blood flow. Additionally, the compounds in red wine have been shown to reduce the formation of blood clots and also bind and prevent cholesterol absorption.

Red wine is also thought to aid in the prevention of certain cancers. The antioxidants found in red wine contribute to tumor suppression and help minimize DNA mutations. These compounds also promote apoptosis, the mechanism that kills cancer cells, and block new blood vessels that feed tumors. Cancer prevention research shows promise with respect to colon cancer, leukemia, melanoma and prostate cancer.

The benefits of red wine and dark chocolate are clear enough to promote the use of these foods rich in antioxidants. However, the possibility of having too much of a good thing must also be considered. So go ahead and treat yourself to an occasional comforting glass of red wine and a silky smooth piece of dark chocolate. It's a perfect relationship that provides many benefits to your health.



Recreating a classic couple:

spaghetti and meatballs

According to the U.S. Greeting Card Association, in February of last year, more than 190 million Valentine's Day cards were purchased and sent to family, friends, lovers and crushes. Add to that the valentines made and exchanged by school-children, and the number hits the 1 billion mark.



DEBORAH BUNKA

At my house, Feb. 14 will be spent celebrating the 28th anniversary of my first date with my husband. Beginning our relationship on such a high-pressure holiday wasn't something we intended. In fact, I didn't recall the exact date until I consulted my diary a few years into the courtship. Looking back, I'm not sure how we didn't know it was Valentine's Day, but I guess we were both pretty nervous. I just remember walking home after going to see the movie "Tootsie," my husband-to-be doing his best to hold my hand while I repeatedly stuck it back in my warm parka pocket.

If you are hoping to create an amorous atmosphere in your own home this Valentine's Day, why not try recreating one of the most beloved romantic scenes in all of motion picture history? I am, of course, referring to the scene in "Lady and the Tramp" where the purebred Lady and the scruffy street mutt Tramp share a plate of spaghetti and meatballs in an alley behind an Italian café. With the waiter supplying the music and the candle in the wine bottle burning brightly, the two dogs unknowingly share the same strand of spaghetti until it ends in a surprise kiss.

Making spaghetti and meatballs from scratch is easy to do. The meatball recipe at right is simple. Just try not to overcook them. Even smothered in a great-tasting sauce, dry meatballs taste dry. Moist and delicious is the goal. The sauce recipe is also about as basic as it gets. If you are having wine with the meal — I suggest a red cabernet — try adding some wine to the sauce. It really enhances the flavor.

As for your pasta choice, you should probably go with regular spaghetti. It supports the weight of the sauce nicely and is a classic meatball partner.

MEATBALLS

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground chuck
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onions
- 2 tablespoons uncooked oatmeal
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes or freshly ground black pepper
- Spray cooking oil, unless using a nonstick pan

Directions

Mix together all ingredients. Do not over-mix. Form meatballs using 2 tablespoons of mixture per meatball. Over medium heat, brown meatballs on all sides. To ensure thorough cooking, total cooking time should be about 15 minutes.

Yield: 12 meatballs

TASTY TOMATO SAUCE

Ingredients

- 2 28-ounce cans of diced tomatoes
- 1 13-ounce can tomato paste
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (2 tablespoons dried)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano (1 tablespoon dried oregano leaves)
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Optional: Add some red wine to the sauce. The alcohol will burn off, but the flavor will be enhanced.

Directions


Heat oil. Sauté onions and garlic until translucent, then add basil, oregano, parsley and bay leaf. Cook for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Add red wine if desired, and simmer for at least one hour.

Yield: 8 cups

Serve meatballs and sauce over hot cooked spaghetti.

Suggested sides to accompany the meal might be a simple leaf salad with oil and vinegar dressing or perhaps some garlic bread.

Who knows? A couple of candles, a checkered tablecloth, a Dean Martin CD, and it just might turn out to be your "Bella Notte."

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skin care | **VEINS**

Winter a good time to treat visible veins

Winter is the perfect time to treat the visible blood vessels on your legs. It takes time for the blood vessels to disappear after treatment, and the long pants you wear during the winter can hide temporary side effects such as brown pigment or bruising.



KATHY COOK

Veins carry blood back to the heart by a system of superficial and deep vessels that are connected by perforating veins that run through the muscles. Veins visible on the surface have different names, depending on their size. Spider veins are superficial blood vessels 1 millimeter or smaller in diameter that appear red or blue in the skin. Reticular veins are 1 to 3 millimeters in diameter. Large, dilated blood vessels are called varicose veins.

Abnormal veins may need to be evaluated with an ultrasound Doppler device to detect the highest level of involvement. The largest abnormal vessels need to be treated before the more superficial small vessels are treated. Larger varicose veins may be covered by insurance, which will vary with different insurance plans. The most common symptoms are dull, throbbing to burning sensations. Over time, the larger varicose veins may lead to skin changes, such as brown discoloration, firm skin and ulcerations or skin breakdown.

Small blood vessel treatment is often considered to be cosmetic. Usually the smaller veins do not cause symptoms.

The causes of spider and varicose veins are unknown. Women are more likely than men to have varicose veins. Other factors in the development of these veins include puberty, birth control pills, pregnancy hormone replacement and genetic susceptibility. There is no proven method of prevention, but wearing support hose may help, along with maintaining a normal weight, exercising regularly, eating a diet high in fiber, wearing low-heeled shoes and wearing sunscreen.

Treatment of small veins includes sclerotherapy, which involves injecting a substance into the vein to scar the vessel wall, causing the vein to disappear. Sclerotherapy for small veins has been available since the 1930s. Recently several new solutions have been approved for treatment in the United States. The solution used depends on the size of the vessels to be treated.

High-strength salt solution, or hypertonic saline, clears veins by dehydrating the blood vessel cell wall. It has no risk of allergic reactions. Risks are pain and cramping at the time of injection, skin breakdown and hyperpigmentation.

A recently approved agent, polidocanol, is a detergent causing damage by altering the surface tension around cells lining the blood vessels. It has the lowest risk of pain and skin breakdown. There is a rare risk of allergic reaction.

Walking after these treatments is encouraged. After treatment, a patient may be required to wear support hose for a week or longer. Some physicians require the hose to be worn 24 hours a day, including during showering. In a study, compression improved the results of sclerotherapy.

Larger veins may be treated by an endovascular laser, in which a laser is inserted into the vein that closes the vein as it is withdrawn, or by stripping, ligation or radiofrequency. The physician may use ultrasound to guide the laser in larger vessels. Once in the vein, the light from the laser is absorbed by hemoglobin in the red blood cells that flow through blood vessels. This creates heat that destroys the blood vessel without damaging the surrounding structures. Superficial veins have been treated from the surface by a variety of lasers.

The risks of laser treatment can include stinging or pain at the site of injection, swelling of the ankles or feet, and cramping. Brown lines or spots may occur when blood escapes from the treated veins. Discoloration can last from weeks to months and seems to be more common in darker-skinned people and after treatment of larger veins.

Telangiectasia matting (finer smaller blood vessels appearing at the site of treatment) develops in a third of patients. This condition may eventually resolve on its own or can be treated. Temporary bruising is more likely to occur with some of the lasers rather than with sclerotherapy. Small, painful ulcers can also occur if the solution is injected into the skin rather than into a blood vessel. Allergic reactions are rare but could be serious or even fatal.

Different specialists, including dermatologists and vascular surgeons, treat blood vessel problems, depending on their severity. Some dermatologists, for example, treat the smaller vessels in their offices and refer patients to other doctors for treatment of the larger vessels.

something to look forward to | **HEALTHY HAIR IN WINTER**

Q How do you recommend keeping hair healthy during these long, dry winter months?

A This is a common question stylists get during the winter. One of the best things you can do to help keep your hair moisturized is to get a deep conditioning treatment. You can either get a deep conditioning treatment at your salon during your hair appointment, or you can purchase the treatment from your salon or at a local store. Use the deep conditioning treatment once or twice a month to replenish moisture in your hair. If applying the deep conditioning treatment at home, plan on 20 to 30 minutes and place a shower cap over your hair while the treatment sits.

During the winter months, it will also help to use moisturizing shampoo and conditioner. Most product companies offer both moisturizing shampoo and conditioner; you can use these every day or alternate with your usual shampoo and conditioner. After washing hair, you can also add a leave-in conditioner to your daily hair care routine. Leave-in conditioners are not only good for getting tangles out of the hair, but they also offer protection from ultraviolet light and add vitamins and minerals back into the hair. Finally, before heating the hair by blow drying or straightening, add a heat protecting spray or serum to protect the hair.



JOSHUA DUCHENE

Q What is the best way to get volume into my limp hair?

A There are lots of different ways to add volume to any kind of hair. Depending on how courageous you are feeling, you can try anything from a new product to a new color.

If you like the color and style of your hair, the first thing to try is a volumizing product. Start by getting a volumizing shampoo and conditioner, then add a volumizing root lifter to your daily styling regimen. Spray the root lifter at your roots only before you blow-dry.

Start by blow-drying your hair to one side and then blow-dry your hair to the other side. Blow-drying your hair in different directions will add volume. After styling, use a volumizing hair spray, not too heavy, but with a good amount of hold. If the hair spray is too heavy, it will weigh the hair down, giving it a limp, lifeless look.

If you are ready for a whole new look, a different cut or color can add a lot to limp hair. Layered hairstyles are always a good choice when looking for volume. Adding highlights and lowlights can also work well. Some properly placed highlights and a good color choice will create an illusion of volume in fine, straight hair.



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Eliz Greene was seven months pregnant with twins when she suffered a massive heart attack. Determined not to lose her new-found passion for life and to regain her health, Eliz developed strategies to fit activity and healthy habits into her life. She has dedicated her life to helping people deal with the special challenges of modern life and heart health. "What comes first," she asks, "your work or your health?"

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faceted woman | IRINA BASSIS

Name: Irina Bassis

Age: 48

Position: Director, Community Relations Department, Mary Greeley Medical Center

Family: Husband, Vlad; daughter, Anastasia

What would you do with \$1,000 to spend on yourself?

New suit; the Barnes and Noble "new releases" section; spa day with my daughter; two jars of beluga caviar; and a bottle of Dom Perignon. A girl can dream, right?

Your favorite meal:

Baked brie with peach jam and walnuts. I cannot imagine my New Year's celebration without it.

Craziest fashion you ever wore:

A Gypsy-type skirt with ruffles, lots of shiny jewelry and a shiny top. My daughter was embarrassed to admit that she was in my party.

I never leave home without:

Stain remover (proud of) and my BlackBerry (not so proud of).

Your favorite motto:

I live by Lewis Carroll's saying in "Alice in Wonderland": "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

What makes you happy?

The house is spic and span, the snow is falling, the fire is on, and I sit by the window, a great book in my hand.

What makes you feel confident?

Knowledge and experience — and a great pair of shoes!



Photo courtesy of Irina Bassis

What makes you laugh?

A great joke told by my husband.

What have you accomplished that has made you proud?

My daughter is my greatest accomplishment in my life. I am extremely proud of her and happy that she is my closest friend and the best travel companion.

Do you believe in New Year's resolutions? Do you have one this year?

I believe plans are conceived, timelines carried out and results achieved regardless of mystical attachments we ascribe to calendar sequences. New Year's to me signifies the magic of the future, the promises I cannot decipher, and unknown wonder of things to come. I have never made a New Year's resolution. I always hope for the best and have a plan ready if something does not work out.

Best tip to look and feel great:

Wake up at 8 a.m., take a bath

filled with milk and honey, go to a beauty salon at 10 a.m. and consult your dietitian at noon ... just kidding! This is my best tip: I believe people with a twinkle in their eyes and a smile on their lips look the best.

How do you take care of yourself financially?

I do not overindulge. I think before I buy (most of the time). I have to admit, though, that sale tags exert magical powers ... I try to resist, sometimes successfully, other times, not so.

If you could do or be anything you want, what would it be?

I like many things about myself. Yet, on some days I feel that if I were able to add a mix of Ashley Judd and Catherine Deneuve, I would make one magical woman.

How do you reward yourself?

A seaside vacation, a good movie where I can laugh and cry (preferably both at the same time) and a delicious, home-

cooked Ukrainian meal.

My idea of a nightmare job:

Shark feeder. Enough said.

My simplest pleasure:

When my extremely independent cat suddenly leaps into my lap and stays there for as long as I do not move. Pure pleasure — unfortunately, quite rare.

I crave:

Fresh snow and 25 degrees, ideal conditions for skiing.

I secretly love:

"Desperate Housewives." Hey, at least it's not reality TV.

I am thankful for:

My health, my family, sunshine and gloomy days; I am thankful for being a part of the world.

Favorite wardrobe staple:

Nice shoes.

What financial advice would you give other women?

Sales, sales, sales. The (insert desirable item) you want today will be 50 percent off tomorrow. Until then, shop your closet for fresh combinations. Live within your means.

How do you give back to your community?

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give," said Sir Winston Churchill many years ago. I am involved in the city of Ames sustainability task force, a member of the Public Art Commission, a member of the Ark Board of Directors and a member of the Newton-Smila (Ukraine) Sister City board (called OPEN for Organization Promoting Everlasting Neighbors.)



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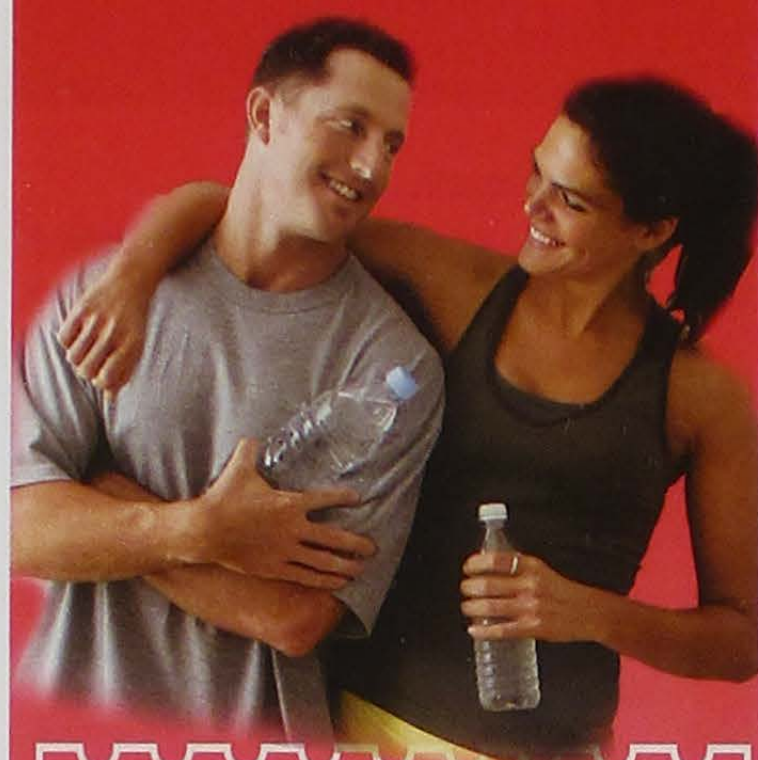
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By Molly Clark/Facets

Molly Clark's cat, Charlie, survived for four days outside on her own as a kitten after the cat's mother was hit by a car.

My best friend, CHARLIE

I grew up in a family of "dog people." For as long as I can remember, we always had a dog in the house. I was never really exposed to cats until I got to college, and I didn't particularly care for them at first.

Then, two summers ago, I lived with a roommate who had a cat, and my whole view on them changed. After living with and bonding with this cat for three months, I was hooked. I started to realize cats are smart and independent, and I wanted my own.

Finally, last summer, I got my chance. In July, my mom text-messed me a picture of a tiny black, white and gray kitten, and I fell in love right away. My mother said the kitten's name was Charlie and she needed a good home.

Charlie's mother was a farm cat that belonged to a family right outside my home-

town of Atlantic. Sadly, the mother cat was hit by a car right after she had her kittens, and the family wasn't sure where the kittens were. After a few days, no kittens had appeared, and they feared the worst.

Four days after the mother cat was hit, the family heard something in the bushes outside their house. A tiny kitten crawled out. It was Charlie. She had survived on rain water for four days outside on her own, the only kitten in the litter to survive.

A week after my mom called me, I drove to Atlantic to pick Charlie up. When I first got her, she was only four weeks old, and she fit easily in the palm of my hand. I knew the second I met her she was the kitten for me.

I've had Charlie for about seven months now, and we have definitely had our ups and downs. Like all pets, she sometimes causes trouble. She seems to really like chewing up the cords on my headphones if I leave them in a place she can get to. But even when she makes me mad, I still love her.

People say that dogs are man's best friend, but my best friend is definitely a cat.



**MOLLY
CLARK**

No matter what your situation is The Ames Contracting Team can help...

Peggy Cutlip and her husband Randal were planning to wait a few years before remodeling the main bathroom in their Ames home. But with their children coming home for the summer and another full bath needed, a shotgun remodeling project ensued.

"We simply had to remodel the first-floor bathroom," said Peggy. "Having only one shower with a full house wasn't going to cut it. And since this was such a quick turnaround (two months), we had to choose a company we trusted and respected to help navigate us through this project."

The Cutlips knew exactly who they were going to call. The Ames Contracting Team.

Ames Contracting Team worked with the Cutlip family back in 2007 when they made an addition onto their home. The Cutlip family found out about Ames Contracting Team when they were replacing a window and toying with the idea of adding a master bath to their bedroom. While at the Cutlip's household to replace the window, a Pella Company representative recommended the Ames Contracting Team to help them with their remodel.

"We didn't really know what we were getting ourselves into then [starting a master bath remodel project]," said Peggy. "But even though we were living in such a mess, Ames Contracting Team made it completely livable."

This time around, the Ames Contracting Team didn't fail to meet the Cutlip's high expectations.

"The Ames Contracting Team does such a great job of knowing exactly what you need to make your vision a reality, while increasing the value of your home," said Peggy. "They don't try to weasel you out of your hard-earned money. When they came in to evaluate our bathroom, they told me that the tub, sink and counter were almost like new and there was no need to replace them."

What got replaced were the toilet (with a more efficient model), a new fan, a new window and cabinets.

"There is a window in our bathroom that was in the way of the curved shower I wanted," said Peggy. "So when we moved the window, we also replaced it with a new energy efficient one."

"With everything they were working on, I thought we wouldn't meet our project timeline, said Peggy. "However, the

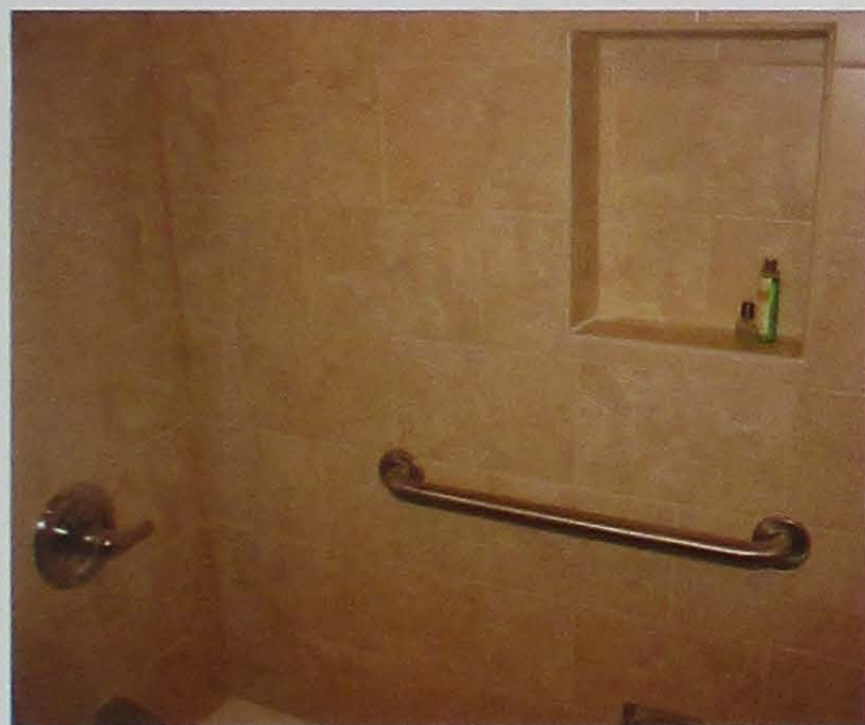
Ames Contracting Team took our bathroom cabinets and drawers to their shop to refinish so we could get the project completed on time."

The remodel hit a snag with an unexpected health issue came up for Peggy. She and her husband had to be away for long periods of time, so they gave Ames Contracting Team the keys to their home to continue working.

"Being able to trust this company enough to give them access to my home while I was away for a long period of time really says something about the integrity and honesty of their team," said Peggy. "They always made sure to clean up after themselves and lock up the doors when they left. It's such a nice feeling knowing I can trust them."

The completed project used a milk chocolate brown paint color on the walls.

"I just love it," said Peggy. "I'm delighted with the entire finished product. The fact that they tell you what they are going to do, do it and keep you within your budget really sets them apart. But what really sold us on the Ames Contracting Team is the friendship we've made with them and the family-like treatment we've been given."



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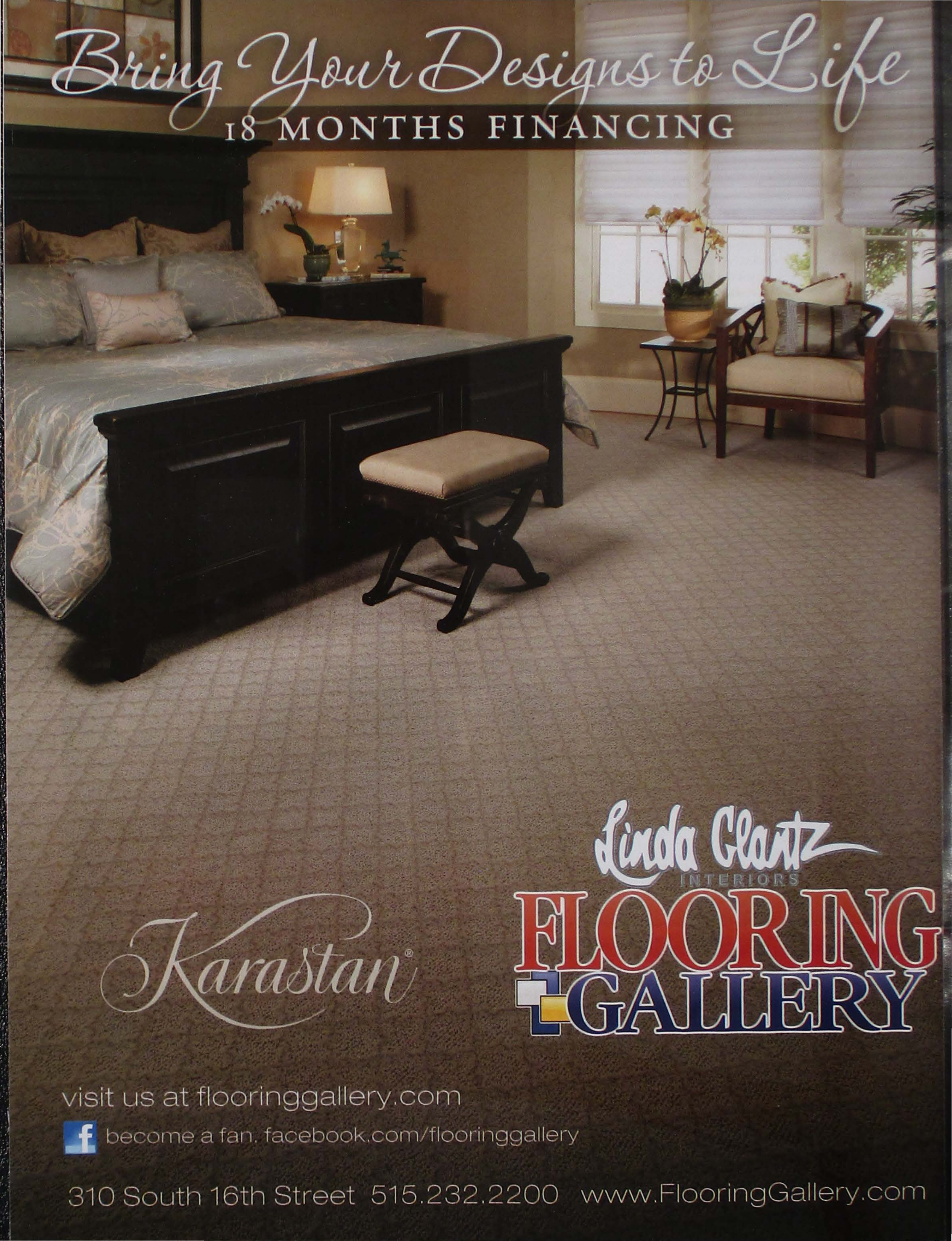
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